

FWP COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: August 30, 2012

Agenda Item: Island Lake FAS Addition

Division: Fish and Wildlife

Action Needed: Endorsement

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 5 minutes

Background

The Island Lake FAS was acquired in 2000 and is located approximately 20 miles west of Kalispell and 30 miles north of Highway 2. Access from Highway 2 is from the south via the Pleasant Valley and Island Lake roads. The last approximately .5 mile of road to the site is a primitive unimproved gravel road through a section of land owned by the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT). MDT granted FWP an easement through its land to access the FAS. The primitive nature of this access road through the MDT property poses a challenge if FWP were to improve it to similar access road standards at other FAS's due to anticipated construction and maintenance costs for a road of that condition and length. The preliminary cost estimate for developing that section of primitive road is in excess of \$50,000. An alternative is to develop a shorter, new road into the FAS from the north side of the property via the Island Lake Road. A small, approximately 2-acre parcel of private land separates the FAS from this road. The landowner has indicated that he would sell FWP that parcel but is not interested in providing an easement for concern it would have a negative effect on the land's value. FWP is seeking the Commission's approval to negotiate with the landowner and conduct due diligence on the acquisition of this parcel.

Public Involvement Process and Results

There has been no public involvement to date. The process is in the preliminary investigations stage at this point. If the Commission endorses moving ahead on this project, the Department would begin due diligence, including an appraisal and survey of the property. If negotiations are successful on the land value the Department would precede with the MEPA process, to include a public notification and comment period.

Alternatives and Analysis

Another alternative is to improve the primitive access road on the existing MDT easement. Once the value of the property is known, a cost benefit analysis will be conducted to evaluate the most cost effective alternative.

Agency Recommendation and Rationale

FWP recommends that the Commission endorse further investigation into the cost of acquiring the private parcel and constructing an access road to the Island Lake FAS, and conduct a cost-benefit analysis to determine the most cost effective approach.

Proposed Motion

"I move that the Commission authorize the Department to further examine the cost benefit analysis of acquiring the private parcel for construction of an access road to the Island Lake FAS."

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